

# The TURNTABLE

March 2009

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PAID & VOLUNTEER STAFF OF RAILTOWN 1897 STATE HISTORIC PARK

## Important Dates

### March 7 & 21

**9-3 PM**

Docent Training– All Volunteers invited to attend!

### March 7 & 21

**1:15 PM**

Behind the Scenes Tour of the #3 project for Volunteers (as part of volunteer training program)

### March 10th

**1-2:30** Interpretive Committee Meeting

### March 21

**3-5 PM**

*Car Host Workshop*  
Come share your ideas and learn something too as we tour the route as a group on board the train.

### March 15th

**9-4**

Air Brake and Train Handling-With Wayne Penn

### March 28

**9-Noon**

Fire Chase Training (classroom)

### April 4th

Opening Day!  
Early Bird Program  
7am

## **Committees Report**

The Special Events Committee's goals were to evaluate current events and consider additional events. Delta Pick Mello (the Foundation Membership Director), asked us to consider if events are Fundraisers, "Friend" raisers, or Attendance generating events. Considering events in this way helps us to consider benefit vs. cost. For example, if we consider the purpose of an event to be a fundraiser, but after event costs and time we haven't met the goals of the event perhaps the event should be reconsidered. We also discussed the importance of keeping events simple so they can be sustained. Several new events were brainstormed and will be considered at the next meeting .

The Interpretive Program Improvement Committee considered ways to enhance current interpretive offerings, including hand-held objects, Greeter positions, Tour Guide and Car Host enhancements, exhibits and signage. A sub-meeting was convened to discuss the Car Host program, and an on-board car host workshop was scheduled for March 21st.

The Training Committee reviewed the plans for the Feb 21st Open House (which was a resounding success!), and the new docent training program. Team members Bob Gibson and Dave Connery have developed a continuing training program. Docents will be encouraged to participate in 8 hours of continuing training annually, (which can include all-hands meetings and other opportunities). This has been added to the duty statement for new volunteers.

The Work Day Process Improvement Committee met informally to brainstorm ways to improve efficiency. Will meet as needed.

Other committees will be convening as this newsletter goes to press. Thank you to everyone who has participated so far. There is lots of work to do, and it takes many hands (and minds!) Contact Dave R. to sign up for committees.



Prescott and Arizona Central #2 (later the Sierra #2)

# 'Gus' Swason Award Presented

by Dave Tadlock



On Sunday February 15<sup>th</sup> 2009, Warren Smith was awarded the first ever *Legends of the Roundhouse* "Gus Swason" Award. This peer-nominated award is given to the person who most exemplifies the spirit and devotion to keeping steam railroading alive at Railtown. It is named in honor of August "Gus" Swason, a Swedish immigrant who came to the United States in 1904 and shortly thereafter began working for the Sierra Railway.

Gus eventually became an engineer working mostly on the Angels branch. Gus was known for his various antics and for having painted the now famous star on Locomotive #30. While Gus was a practical joker he also was a very skilled and devoted engineer. Gus passed away in Roseville, California in 1967 at the age of 83.

Warren started working at Railtown in 1995 after having served as president and locomotive engineer for the Pacific Locomotive Association in the San Francisco Bay area. He is retired from Chevron, where he worked at the Martinez refinery.

He has been known to pull a practical joke or two on unsuspecting crew members or other volunteers. But more importantly Warren is always the first to step up and help a new crew member and is always making sure safe railroading is practiced.



Warren and Ardyth at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

**This newsletter is emailed, and distributed at the first Tuesday work day each month. It is mailed out later in the week to everyone else. Let us know if you are not on our email list and would like to be!**



Sierra #2 in 1898 in Oakdale



# Volunteer Training Program Begins!

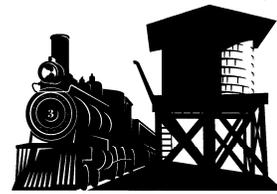
The official volunteer training program starts on March 7th. All continuing volunteers are invited to attend, for your own continuing training, and also to help welcome our new volunteers into the program. You'll find a training schedule in this newsletter.

We will be presenting the same training program, twice, on March 7th & 21st. Of particular interest to continuing volunteers will be the Tour of the #3 project. The public slide show will be presented, with a more detailed look at the history of the locomotive and the restoration being undertaken in the Tri Dam shop. This project will be receiving a lot of attention in 2009, and this is your opportunity to get the most updated information.

Also new this year is a "New Volunteer Orientation Checklist" (shown, at right). We are encouraging all new volunteers to use this as a tool to for a well-rounded orientation to the park, no matter where they ultimately choose to work.

Also new this year is a written career path for the Engine Crew, combined with a management panel to review and recommend promotions. This will be consistent with the process used at the California State Railroad Museum on the Sacramento Southern RR. The panel will consist of paid and volunteer staff, who will help guide the engine crew through their advancement process.

In another development, we will be offering monthly training opportunities. You'll find a copy of the tentative training schedule for the upcoming season, and are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these mini-training opportunities, which are designed to help you keep your knowledge fresh and current. If you have suggestions for training speakers or topics, Please let Bob Gibson or advise Dave Rainwater.



**RAILTOWN 1897**  
State Historic Park  
Jamestown, California

*Date Completed*

## NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

For a well-rounded view of all of our volunteer operations, it is suggested that you participate in as many of the following experiences as possible.

	Attended Roundhouse Tour
	1 hour in Depot /Ticket Agent
	Orientation to Firechase
	Attended Tuesday work day
	Attend morning crew meeting in crew caboose
	Worked as greeter 1 hour
	Watched crew ready or put away locomotive
	Attended monthly training day
	Attended monthly training day
	Other:

**Note:** All training counts towards your annual volunteer hours. Please submit to Dave R. when completed.



## 2009 Railtown Training Schedule

*Volunteer Orientation*  
*March 7 & 21, 2009- Carriage Room*

- 9:00**                   **Coffee and Welcome**
- 9:15**                   Introduction to State Parks—Kim Baker, Park Superintendent
- 10:00**                  Historical Overview of Railtown—Dave Connery
- 10:45**                  Break
- 11:00**                  Meet the Docents
  - Car Hosting—Tommy Johnson
  - Walking Tour Guide—Jim Mullin
  - Ticket Agent—John Rand
  - Roving Greeter/ Host/ Interpreter—Laverne Coon
  - Fire Chase Operator—Robert Staggs
  - Introduction To Engine Crew—Warren Smith
- 12:00**                  Bring Your Own Brown Bag Lunch & Social time
- 1:00**                    Safety—Joe Bispo
- 1:15**                    Sierra #3 Engine Tour—Eric Young
- 2:30**                    Rainwater What's next? - Kim Baker
- 3:00**                    Adjourn

### Future Workshops

- March 21              Car Hosts Workshop- On the Run! - 3PM to 5PM
- March 28              Fire Chase—9AM to Noon

### Tentative Monthly Saturday Training—subject to change

- April 18              Railroad Equipment at Railtown              8:30AM to 9:45AM
- May 9                 Mother Lode History                           8:30AM to 9:45AM
- June 13              Gold-Logging-Geology                       8:30AM to 9:45AM
- July 11                Movies at Railtown                           8:30AM to 9:45AM
- August 8             Water Projects-Dams-Hetch Hetchy       8:30AM to 9:45AM
- September 12       Restoration Work                              8:30AM to 9:45AM



### Volunteer Medallions Presented

2008 was the celebration of 25 years of Railtown 1897 as a State Park, so it was a fitting tribute that Marge Lovingfoss, Dottie Bolander and Virgil Lovingfoss were presented with California State Parks' Highest honor for volunteer work, the Volunteer Medallion.

At the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, District Superintendent Cathy Taylor presented the awards and recognized the length and breadth of commitment from these dedicated volunteers. Their involvement in every aspect of the operation over the years was recognized. They have had a hand in everything from mowing lawns, staffing the store, leading tours, train operation, event planning, washing dishes, maintaining buildings and trains, and much, much more.

These three volunteers exemplify the highest quality service and commitment and stewardship for the benefit of the people of California.



### Robert Staggs Receives "Above and Beyond" award



Robert was recognized at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on February 15th, for his many efforts at Railtown. Robert has been particularly appreciated lately for his efforts to repair some of our cantankerous machinery used regularly at the Tri-Dam. During the operating season, he also works regularly as part of the Excursion Train operation. Thanks for all you do to help Railtown, Robert!

### We're thinking of you!

Joe Still will be going through treatment and we want him to know how much we miss him and are thinking of him during this time. We wish you a quick recovery and hope to see you back at the park soon.



**RAILTOWN 1897**  
State Historic Park

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**Jamestown, CA 95327**

**Return Service Requested**

**TO:**



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*Newsletter Available in Alternative Format on Request*